2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

223 from the rim were undesirable because birds flew past the bait before seeing it and frequently did not come down. Certain pits were known to be better than others because of their proper location in respect to the contour of the hill and because of an unobstructed view westward for many miles.

223 425 829 Even in localities visited annually, ancient pits were discovered from time to time. Anyone finding an old pit, if within reasonable distance of a trapping camp, could appropriate it for his use, in which case it became the property of the leader under whom the trapper served. It was not necessary to perform the rites at the pit when reopening the pit, as it was assumed that such rites had been performed originally when the pit was dug. It was both Mandan and Hidatsa belief that all tribes trapping eagles had similar rites. During this study, in an effort to learn the extent of knowledge concerning eagle-trapping by neighboring tribes with whom these two tribes were in constant contacts, Crows Heart was asked if he knew whether the Assiniboine, Cheyenne, and Sioux had ceremonies associated with eagle-trapping. His reply was that he was positive that they did and that both the rites and songs were the same as for his people. When inquiry was made relative to the source of his information whether from attending their trapping expeditions or from information supplied by Indians of these various tribes, his reply was that he had never been out with Indians of any tribe other than the Mandan and Hidatsa, neither had he discussed the matter with Indians of neighboring tribes, but that "it was common sense that they used the same ceremonies, as all eagle-trapping came from the Black Bears, otherwise these neighboring tribes would never have caught eagles." He then added, "If the ceremonies had been omitted, or improperly conducted, the Indians not only would never have caught eagles but other bad luck would have befallen them." This example illustrates the unreliability of information secured from an informant relative to a society of which he is not a part.

223 Whenever advice was needed, the trapper consulted the leader and paid him for his services. The leader usually supervised construction of the cover for the pit. Six poles were crossed and tied as illustrated in Figure 30. This framework was called the "buffalo's backbone." To these poles were tied buckbrush and